



# 2<sup>ND</sup> & 3<sup>RD</sup> MAY

## INTERNATIONAL NON RIDDEN EQUINE WEEKEND

# FREE RESOURCE PACK

The original Non Ridden Equine Facebook group was launched on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017. This group has global membership. Our group celebrates all aspects of non ridden activities people can enjoy with their equines. Non ridden equines are the most at risk of neglect and abandonment. People who choose not to ride face pressures in an equine world geared to riding. International Non Ridden Equine Weekend is a weekend for us all to embrace non ridden and celebrate. We are not anti-riding, everything non ridden is of great benefit to all equines and humans.

FUN, FREE and for YOU. The Non Ridden Equine Association UK  
[www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org](http://www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org)

JOIN IN THE FUN

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YOUR FREE  
RESOURCE PACK  
FOR IDEAS FOR NON  
RIDDEN ACTIVITIES

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STRENGTHEN YOUR  
BOND WITH YOUR  
HORSE

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THERE IS MORE TO  
OWNING A HORSE  
THAN RIDING

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ITS OK NOT TO RIDE



# YOUR FREE RESOURCE PACK

WRITTEN FOR THE NON RIDDEN EQUINE ASSOCIATION UK BY VICKI JAYNE YATES FOR ALL TO ENJOY.

## A BIT OF BACKGROUND HISTORY

The original Non Ridden Equine Facebook group was launched on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017. With no marketing thousands joined. It was clear that more than clicking like on Facebook had to be done. As a direct result of the need from members the not for profit Non Ridden Equine Association UK was launched. Why UK only? We do not have the funds or resources to tackle global issues. However no matter where you live in the world anyone is welcome to enjoy the Non Ridden Equine Association UK website. It is packed with free to access resources from many professionals to inspire, delight and educate.

## WHY INTERNATIONAL NON RIDDEN EQUINE WEEKEND?

A non ridden equine is the most at risk of abuse, substandard care and abandonment. We have an equine crisis and non ridden equines are the hardest to rehome. This along with if you choose to own a non ridden equine or choose not to ride you face challenges and pressures in an equine world geared towards riding. Very little non ridden is taught at grass roots or showcased in the mainstream on the many delights and benefits of non ridden activities. Mostly what you will see is non ridden activities to prepare a horse to be ridden. Not all non ridden activities have that agenda and have a lot to offer us all.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> of May we encourage all who to try out something non ridden. There are a wonderful diverse range of non ridden activities everyone can enjoy. We hope we can change people's perceptions and challenge thinking by promoting the many benefits of non ridden. In turn so it becomes more accepted alongside riding. We are not anti-riding. If more people valued non ridden equines they will not be seen as worthless. Our campaign is to encourage non ridden activities to be seen as having a high value.

## SAFETY FIRST

Never try any new activity with your horse without gaining the knowledge and skills from a professional. The ideas for non ridden activities in this resource pack are provided for you to use alongside support and guidance from a professional of your choice. Always wear safety equipment; such as a hard hat, body protector, gloves and wear suitable footwear and clothing for the activity. Ensure your horse is wearing suitable tack that fits correctly. Regular health checks for your horse are essential to ensure your horse is physically and mentally able to do the activities. Always work safely in a safe environment.



# IDEAS FOR NON RIDDEN ACTIVITIES

The activities are listed in alphabetical order, not in order of importance.

## ADOPT & DONATE



Non ridden equines are the most at risk of neglect and abandonment. Welfare organizations are full to bursting and to keep going they need our help. Why not get a few friends together and pay a visit to your local welfare organization? It is an opportunity to learn about the wonderful work they do. Their dedication to rescuing equines and to rehabilitate them can only happen with support from the public and donations. Many rescue centers run adoption schemes, so you can choose a horse to adopt for a year. Some welfare organizations take in tack and equipment as donations and hold tack sales. You could have a coffee morning and raise money for your chosen equine charity. (Photograph Left: taken at Redwings Oxhill)

## AGILITY

Horse agility is great fun and has many benefits. It is an in hand activity where equine and human navigate a course of obstacles. It is all about development of positive horsemanship. It builds confidence in both the horse and the handler. Engaging in agility you develop your dialogue communication skills, building rapport and understanding as a partnership. It is easy to get started in agility as many of the obstacles are usually found on most yards or are easy to make or inexpensive to purchase. If you want to find out more about agility check out The International Horse Agility Club [www.thehorseagilityclub.com](http://www.thehorseagilityclub.com) (Photograph Right: Drum on an agility play day)



## BALL GAMES



Play is a wonderful activity to enjoy with to your horse. If you use positive reinforcement / clicker training it is easy to teach your horse to play with a ball; as you teach them to target touch. Horses often then discover the joy that they can move the ball about, and if it has a handle they can learn to pick it up. It is possible to teach your horse to play football, and fetch. Balls can be purchased via the internet. They vary in sizes and prices. There are very large purpose made for equines down to gym balls to smaller tough dog balls. It is strongly advised you supervise your horse with the ball. (Photographs left: Kez)

## BALLOONS

Helium balloons are a great training tool. We used some to help our horse deal with the farmer's bird scaring bird of prey kite that appeared in the crop fields we walk round. Using positive reinforcement we enabled our horse to feel confident to approach, inspect and learn that things that floated up in the air are nothing to worry about. (Picture right: Kez and Steve)



## BUBBLES

Blowing bubbles isn't just for children. Blowing bubbles can be an enrichment activity. Ensure you don't frighten your horse by first blowing the bubbles away from him and down wind, so he can see them drift away. Let him get curious and before long he may want to check them out. (Picture right: Kez)



## CLICKER TRAINING / POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT



If you are looking for an ethical and compassionate way to train your horse then clicker training is for you. It is easy to get started, there are many trainers who provide services to teach you how. You will also find on the Non Ridden Equine Association UK website a library with a dedicated section on **Positive Reinforcement** with FREE to enjoy articles from a diversity of professionals to inspire, delight and educate. Clicker training will start non ridden. Once you have mastered the basics it can be embedded into any activity for example: handling, leading, play, agility and riding. To check out the FREE resource Library on the Non Ridden Equine Association UK please use this link:

[www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/the-library.html](http://www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/the-library.html)

(Photograph left: Vicki Yates and Kez and a click treat moment)

## CONES

You can use cones in many ways. To weave in and out of. To mark out a pattern to use for groundwork for example: To do figures of eight, clover leaf pattern, squares, etc. If you have enough you can use them to set out a circle and you stand on the inside of the circle and ask your horse to travel round the outside of the circle. You can use them for playing hide the treat under. They can be used to mark out a box for your horse to halt, and stand in. They are inexpensive and a really useful bit of kit for non ridden activities. (Photograph right: Taken at an Introduction to agility day at Morton Morrell)



## CREATIVITY



Equines are stunningly beautiful and can be inspirational for the creation of art in many forms. Spending time enjoying the beauty of your horse and the environment can be the ignition for your creative juices to flow. We are often too hung up on doing, getting chores done and rushing we miss out on the beauty that surrounds us. Why not decide to record what you have around you be it with photographs, videos, drawing, painting, words, crafts....The only limitation is your imagination.

(Photograph left: Jack by Vicki Jayne Yates)

## DOING OR BEING?

Our modern world is fast paced, often stressful and pressured. We rush about doing and have little time to just be. We are human beings not human doings. How about for International Non Ridden Equine Day you dedicated a window of time to just being with your horse. Not to do anything, do absolutely nothing, just be.

## EQUI-ABILITY

If you are looking for an online activity based training programme designed to help you develop a deeper and more harmonious relationship with your horse check out Equi-ability. It is suitable for non ridden equines and handlers and also riders. There are graded challenges, and you will receive objective feedback, constructive advice and the ability to monitor your progress. Here is the link for more information [www.equi-ability.co.uk](http://www.equi-ability.co.uk)

## EQUINE FACILITATED LEARNING

There are many small organizations that offer equine facilitated learning to people. Each is different, there are a rich diversity of professionals offering coaching services, education, therapeutic counselling, personal development courses, health and wellbeing, corporate activities, recreation therapy, life skills provider and more. There is much debate on the topic of the ethics; and good practitioners see the horse as a partner not a tool. If you or someone you know is struggling check out what your local Equine Facilitated Learning center has to offer. Many of these organizations also work with disadvantaged people and need our support to continue the work they are doing.

## FLAGS

A flag is another inexpensive item you can use in non ridden activities. Great for helping horses to be confident with objects that flap in the breeze. Use positive reinforcement to help your horse learn flags are not to be feared. Once you and your horse are established with positive reinforcement you can use it to teach your horse to target touch. Start by rolling up the flag so only a small bit of fabric is hanging down and ask your horse to target touch. Click and reward and take the flag away to give your horse time to process. If your horse is too worried to target touch walk away with the flag as a predator never leaves, give your horse time to think, process and reflect. Reward any try in being curious.

As your horse grows in confidence you can gradually unfurl more of the flag and gradually add more life to the flag. It pays to work with a horsemanship practitioner to get your technique and timing right. (Picture above right: Vicki Yates and Kez at liberty with a flag)



## FRIENDS & FAMILY



Share with your friends and family your stories and experiences regarding your non ridden equines. Help more people become aware that horses are not just for being ridden. The more it is talked about it will eventually become more widely accepted. So why not take your family to visit your horse. Or share your non ridden stories on your personal Facebook page.

(Photograph left: Vicki Yates with her granddaughter Perri-May and Kez. Perri-May asked if she could ride Kez. Out of the mouths of babes. All her exposure to horses has been mostly in films, cartoons and mainstream images where horses are seen to be ridden. When we told her why Kez is not ridden she was totally accepting of the idea.)

## GROUNDWORK & HORSEMANSHIP

There is good, bad and ugly groundwork practices out there and here is not the platform to debate this. Good groundwork sees the horse as sentient, a partner and uses positive reinforcement and ethical and compassionate methods. There are groundwork activities for helping a horse to be flexible, have core strength, good balance and rhythm. There are groundwork activities that encourage the horse to think rather than react and to look to the handler for guidance. There are exercises on the ground where horse and handler use a shared language to communicate in dialogue. Good groundwork never punishes a horse, or uses gadgets, or uses force or intimidation. Good groundwork builds confidence, trust, rapport, empathy, and is joyful and fun for both horse and handler. It is easy to get stuck doing the same groundwork activities, why not use International Non Ridden Equine Day to research ethical compassionate groundwork approaches. Learning something new is life enriching and fun; it allows us to develop our skills, knowledge and expertise. The Library on the Non Ridden Equine Association UK website has a section dedicated to **Horsemanship**. Here you will find FREE to access lots of articles from a diversity of professionals. Here is the link [www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/the-library.html](http://www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/the-library.html) Enjoy. (Photograph above right: Vicki Yates and Ruby doing groundwork with positive reinforcement)



## HERD WATCHING



Why not just hang out with your horse and the herd? You can learn a great deal about your horse by quietly observing. It is an opportunity for you to learn about equine language and communication, social bonds and herd etiquette. You will be given the chance to see how your horse connects with others in the herd, and see the personality and character of your horse. This activity is great for us humans as we live in a fast paced world. So sitting quietly, simply observing gives us a golden gift of slowing down and the chance to see the world from the horse's perspective.

(Photograph above: Best Friends)

## HOOP

A great activity is to see if you can ask your horse to accurately place his front hooves in a hoop. It is essential you select a hoop that comes apart, like the one in the picture. Just in case your horse gets his legs caught.

(Picture right: Sammy with Christine at Liberty with the hoop exercise.)



## INJURIES

All equines can get into scrapes. Injuries can and do happen. Why not learn about equine first aid? The Blue Cross has some very useful basic information. [www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/basic-first-aid-horses](http://www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/basic-first-aid-horses)

## JUMPING

Some horses love to jump, others don't. If you have a horse that loves to jump, jumping can be non ridden. It is essential you have good groundwork skills before progressing to jumping. If you have a safe enclosed environment you could set up a jump for your horse to pop over in the school in hand or at liberty. If you are highly skilled and adventurous and have access to safe natural jumps, like logs, ditches, banks in the field or a cross country jumps you could choose to take your horse out jumping in hand.

## KINDRED SPIRITS



Many of us are seeking a close bond with our equines. Being kindred spirits is two individuals that share a very special connection. This is achieved by understanding our horse, having empathy and compassion. The relationship with our horse matters. It is important. Horses and humans are social creatures and the connection we have with our equines should be meaningful and joyful for both horse and human. Horses see the world as a horse, we have to step into that world to understand and embrace it. Once we have this underlying understanding we can via ethical horsemanship develop a shared way of viewing the world.

Equines have a language and herd etiquette and values, once you understand these and honor them you will find it easy to be in each other's company and enjoy shared activities. Mutual respect is essential for two kindred spirits. We must respect the horse and allow his opinions to be heard. Mutual trust, we must be reliable, honest, authentic and trustworthy. They say when the student is ready the teacher will arrive. Horses make fabulous teachers. To celebrate International Non Ridden Equine Day why not invest in the relationship with your horse? On the Non Ridden Equine Association UK website you will find a Library and there is a section in the Library dedicated to **The Relationship**. The resources are written by a diversity of professionals, sharing their knowledge and expertise. It is FREE to access.

[www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/the-library.html](http://www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/the-library.html)

(Photograph above: Vicki Yates and Ruby.)

## LIBERTY

Liberty is about giving horses the choice to engage with us and to be a liberty in activities we both enjoy. True liberty is without tack and gives the horse the choice and permission to leave. Then what you are left with is the truth, the connection, mutual trust, play, joy and fun. It is a showcase of your communication and your relationship. Liberty work can greatly enhance groundwork training and riding activities. It will teach you many skills when working at liberty: Patience, flexibility, compassion, empathy, how to ignite self-motivation in your horse, kindness, creativity, great timing, a full grasp of equine language and etiquette, and knowing your horse as an individual. When getting started with liberty training it really helps to have support of an equine professional who specializes in liberty training using positive reinforcement. On the Non Ridden Equine Association UK website there is a Library with a **Liberty** section. It is FREE to access

[www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/the-library.html](http://www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/the-library.html) Enjoy. (Photograph above: Kez and Ringo at Liberty with the podium. This activity took place in their field so they were free to leave at any time.)



## LONG REINING



Long reining may be seen as old fashioned. It has more uses than be part of training for starting a young horse for riding. It is great for building a partnership, bond, confidence and trust in any horse and handler. It teaches your horse to listen to your cues to and to take direction. You can use long reining to manoeuvre round or over obstacles. Long reining can be done in a halter, bitless bridle or with a bit. It pays to get professional guidance when starting out with long reining. Even have lessons with a tutor and an experienced horse. Not many

people regularly long rein, it is becoming a dying art. If you are good at long reining why not celebrate by doing a long reining session with your horse? Or if you want to learn how to long rein why not on non ridden day find a local practitioner to teach you? (Picture above left: Vicki Yates and Ruby)

## LOVE

Horses are sentient creatures that feel a wide range of emotions including love. Love is one tool to embed into horsemanship. Horses and people thrive in loving relationships. Being able to read emotion in horses is equine empathy. Being appropriate is to use compassion in our interactions with the equine. Watch the herd and you will see horses communicate with a wide range of emotions. For example love. They form bonds and express love to one another. Love between horses can be witnessed in many situations. Notice how a pair bond can be perfectly happy standing side by side doing nothing, peaceful and content. Horses grieve the loss of a loved one. Love can be seen in joyful play. Shared love brings peace of mind, harmony and awakens the soul. In the herd love brings balance, stability, harmony, and order. Look closely and you will see love in the herd in so many ways along with a huge range of other emotions. (Picture right: Vicki Yates and Merlot. Merlot was the inspiration for Vicki to share what he taught her regarding love with an article published in Horsemanship Magazine – The Power of Love. Which you can read for FREE via this link [www.vickijayneates.co.uk](http://www.vickijayneates.co.uk))



## MASSAGE

Massaging your horse is a wonderful activity. It enables you to feel your horse's muscles. It can be very pleasurable for the horse. And a wonderful way to connect with your horse. However if there is any tension, areas and of discomfort your horse will not enjoy being massaged. If you do discover any discomfort or pain contact your vet. If you want to learn how to massage your horse there are plenty of courses you can study or books you can read. If you want to treat your horse to a professional massage there are professional equine body workers and professional equine massage specialists.

## MEMBERSHIP IS FREE

Membership to the Non Ridden Equine Association UK is FREE. Membership to our original Non Ridden Equine Facebook group and our many affiliated, local, regional and national non ridden equine Facebook groups is FREE. For more information on all the Non Ridden Equine Facebook groups please use this link [www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/facebook-groups.html](http://www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/facebook-groups.html)

## MENTAL WELLBEING

It is well known that having equines in our lives is great for our emotional wellbeing. Many equine therapy centers provide services to support people with mental health issues with equine-assisted psychotherapy. People can learn and understand by working with a professional and an equine about their condition and what triggers or causes it.

Those of who own an equine know first-hand the many benefits equines bring to our emotional wellbeing. Horses rely on us for their care. So it gives us focus, a reason to get up and get going each day. We must be reliable. The link between physical and mental health is well documented and looking after an equine gives us exercise and keeps us active. If you are struggling emotionally and own a horse, your horse will know. Horses are very astute and trying to disguise your feelings or wear a mask with rattle them. They see the incongruence. Horses need us to be authentic and to address our issues. They will often reflect back to us the life issues we need to examine and the work we must do from within. Being with our horses can be very therapeutic. Activities such as caring for your horse, grooming, feeding, and enjoying activities with your horse can reduce stress and anxiety. The friendship, companionship and partnership we share with our equines can be a deep meaningful relationship that for some people is lifelong. Spending time with your horse can lift your spirits and is a natural mood enhancer. Research has shown that spending time with animals can help reduce stress, anxiety and depression. It can help you to feel calmer, happier and feel more positive about life. On Non Ridden Equine Day maybe celebrate how good being with equines is for your mental wellbeing and happiness.

## MUTUAL GROOMING



Equines love to bond and form strong friendships. A very natural activity pair bonds engage in is mutually grooming each other. We can engage in a similar activity with our horse. It is an opportunity to discover how a horse likes to be touched. Each horse has a preference, some love gentle soft stroking, others a good scratch. Humans get busy with dirt removal when grooming. How about instead asking your horse how he likes to be groomed? Look for feedback from your horse, if he's happy he will be blissed out. Your horse may offer to groom you in return. Some horses are careful and mindful and gentle, others are rough. It can hurt, so you can provide an alternative by placing an old jacket or a towel over a stable door and encourage your horse to groom that instead of you. Knowing what type of touch your horse finds pleasurable can also be used as a reward.

(Picture above left: Steve Yates and Ruby engaging in mutual grooming.)

## NOT RIDING TODAY?

In an equine world geared towards riding, this question "not riding today?" in its' various forms gets asked people who choose not to ride. It is then sometimes followed by more questions and the person can feel pressured to justify why they choose not to ride. There are many reasons why people choose not to ride. They can be very personal reasons. Sadly for some people this questioning and pressure can turn to criticism, ridicule and judgement. Without education on the many joys and benefits of non ridden this will continue. Non ridden Equine Day is a starting point for change. It is for all to enjoy. Here is a link for information on some of the many reasons why people choose not to ride.

[www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/why-are-you-not-riding.html](http://www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/why-are-you-not-riding.html)



## OPPORTUNITIES IN WORKS CLOTHING

On Non Ridden Equine Day why not work on those little annoying problems? These are golden gifts in crappy paper. They are opportunities to develop our skills, our expertise and knowledge. We don't know what we don't know, so an investment in sessions with a skilled practitioner really is a wonderful investment. Use Non Ridden Equine Day as a reason to get on the ground with your horse with a professional to teach you something new. On the ground with our horse is a wonderful place to start. It can be an enlightening experience. Whatever the problem, get curious about how your horse may see things.

## PAMPER YOUR PONY

Some equines love to be pampered others not. If you own one that adores the attention of being pampered why not use non ridden equine day as a day to pamper your equine. If it is warm you could bathe your horse. Or practice braiding his mane or tail. You could give your horse a spa day, the full works, book treatments from a professional: massage, reiki, bowen, etc..... If you keep your horse at a livery yard you could get together as a group and share top pampering ideas. Once you have finished pampering your pony you could take photographs to use for on-line showing. (More about this in the resource pack later under X-FACTOR)  
(Photograph right: Kez with a running braid)



## PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Caring for an equine is physical and can contribute to us staying healthy. Day to day care activities such as poo picking around the fields require us to lift scoops of poop and push a wheelbarrow. Great for getting out doors, enjoy the fresh air, being in nature and when the sun shines natural vitamin D, helping maintain bone health. Physical movements such as walking with our horse or playing help us develop better reflexes, balance, core strength, coordination, increased joint mobility, flexibility and muscle tone. Physical exercise makes you feel good as it raises the levels of the natural mood-enhancing hormones. Plus it can be one useful tool in burning calories keeping waistlines in check.

## PICNIC



Going on a picnic can be great fun. You could take your horse out in hand to picnic, or bring a selection of treats for your horse to enjoy in his field, yard or stable. A picnic can be a wonderful social activity for you and your yard friends to enjoy while out in the sunshine. It is a fun activity to sit together and talk about your horses, and what you love to do. If you decided to organize a picnic on Non Ridden Equine Day it is a perfect opportunity to set the theme to a celebration of all things non ridden.

(Picture above: Kez enjoying a picnic picking a pear from the tree)

## PLAY



Play is not just for the young, play is a lifetime gift. Play is not frivolous. There is far more to play than first meets the eye. Play provides us with an excellent opportunity to fully engage with our horses on many levels: cognitively, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. It teaches horses and humans about sharing a learning experience. In horsemanship play is a wonderful tool in development of a shared language as it opens up two way communication. It builds self-esteem and self-confidence in both equine and human participants which enriches a shared supportive relationship. Play is wonderful for building mutual respect, trust and bonding. If you want to ignite cognitive

development in your horse play is a great way to encourage your horse to think. Horses are very able to cognitively process, problem solve and think things through. Play allows horses to explore the world and is fabulous for conquering their fears. Using play you can help your horse think, to look to you for guidance rather than react. Play in horsemanship teaches humans about patience and understanding. As for true horsemanship play should be 50 / 50 with the horse. So here it is essential we listen to the horse, as to what type of play an individual enjoys. Through play horses develop emotional maturity and the ability to concentrate. Exploration is the heart of play and it is the ignition to curiosity and problem-solving skills. Too many of us get hung up on being serious with our horses. Letting your hair down, laughter and joy in play is a wonderful way to spend time with your horse. Play should be a cherished part of horsemanship. It sets you up for a meaningful close bond and friendship with your horse. It is sociable, rewarding, motivating and sets us up for success mentally, physically, socially and emotionally. Most of all play is fun. For more information on play check out Vicki Jayne Yates website [www.vickijayneyates.co.uk](http://www.vickijayneyates.co.uk) . In the resources section she shares her published articles on the Art of Play. (Photograph above left: Kez playing with his ball.)

## PODIUM / PEDESTAL

A podium or a pedestal is a great piece of equipment to have for non ridden activities. Teaching your horse to be confident standing on a podium has many benefits. These include confidence putting their feet on a surface that makes a noise. Coordination and body awareness stepping up and down. Accuracy of hoof placement. You can also use a podium to help prepare a horse for loading training. They are easy to make from a strong heavy duty pallet, reinforced with marine ply with an anti-slip mat on the top. (Photograph right: Drum and Craig.)



## POLE WORK



A few poles can be used in many ways for in hand activities. They are great for exercises to build core strength, regulate stride length, improve flexibility and encourage a horse to become more aware of hoof placements. You can ask your horse to step over poles. And there are so many possibilities of how you can lay them out. You can raise them at one end or both (we use child potties from the pound



shop). You can make a box and use it as a stay box. Or a walk in and out box. You can build mazes and corridors with poles. Pole work can be hard work, so it pays to get advice and guidance from a physiotherapist or vet regarding its suitability for your horse. (Photographs left and right above: Kez and Steve.)

## QUIETEN THE MIND

In our fast paced world it can be a challenge to quieten the mind. Being with your horse is a wonderful opportunity to practice quietening the mind and mindfulness. There are equine professionals who can teach you mindfulness techniques and how to embed them into horsemanship. These are tools not just for being with your horse, these you can apply in any aspect of life. There are many benefits for mind, body and soul. It reduces stress, tension and anxiety. It helps you to gain perspective and control of your thoughts and emotions. Mindfulness helps us to be present to live in the here and now. Why not use Non Ridden Equine Day as the inspiration for finding out more about tapping into mindfulness with horses? (Photograph right: Ruby and Vicki Yates)



## RELAXATION



There are lots of relaxation techniques that cross the species divide into both worlds of horses and humans. Horses have relaxation down to a fine art. They enjoy being together chilling. One to ponder: It is impossible to be tense, anxious or fearful at the same time as relaxed. They are polar opposites. So if you and or your horse feel tense, anxious or fearful then learning how to tap into relaxation is for you. Relaxation lowers adrenaline and is good for health and wellbeing. A relaxed horse can think rather than react. A relaxed horse is safer to be around. A relaxed horse is easier to train. Relaxation increases learning, in turn this unlocks potential. Relaxation allows you to connect with what really matters in life, inner peace. Inner peace is what is magnetic to horses. It centers your energy. Being able to handle more and more stress, uses up a huge amount energy. It drains you. Relaxation can enable higher achievement, better communication, open minds and fuel creativity. It takes the drama out of situations. Relaxation leads to better understanding, control of emotions, and a balanced state of mind and energy. With relaxation you become more aware of everything around you. With all these benefits why not use Non Ridden Equine Day to research relaxation techniques you can practice with your horse? Or seek out an equine professional to teach you these techniques? Relaxation is a technique you can learn and master. There are many different techniques you can try. You should try a few so as to find one that suits you. Don't worry if you find it difficult to relax at first. It's a skill that needs to be learned and it will come with practice. (Picture above left: Alfie and Joker)

## SCENT GAMES

Horses love to explore and discover new things, using all their senses. A horse has a wonderful sense of smell. I am sure you have seen a horse tilt up his head and curl up his top lip. It is called flehmen and has a purpose. Horses do this to trap a scent so they can analyze the smell. We rarely think about scent when planning an activity for our equines. So why not set up some fun for your horse to use his nose to sniff out some rewards. You could play a game called find the food, leave your horses food in different places in the field, yard or stable and let your horse enjoy the fun of finding it. You could hide treats in a pile of hay, or under a bucket, or scatter small bits of treats in random places in the field. You could set out some cones and under some place a treat so your horse has to investigate which ones have treats. You could select some of your horse's natural hedgerow treats and place towels over them, so your horse has to sniff out the treats to get to them. You could book a session with an equine aroma therapist or equine herbalist to discover which essential oils or herbs your horse would self-select. (Picture above right: Puzzle showing us flehmen)



## SPOOK BUSTING

If we go walkies or ride out with our horse we are likely to meet things that rattle or spook our horse. Helping our horse to look to us for guidance rather than react is a great tool. You could do an in-hand spook busting session in a safe environment to help you and your horse to become more confident in tackling spooky situations. As spook busting must be done ethically and correctly please book a session with a professional who uses positive reinforcement to show you how. On the Non Ridden Equine Association UK website you will find a library with a section dedicated to positive reinforcement packed full of resources to get you started with positive reinforcement. Play is also great for spook busting and bomb proofing your horse. Horse and human together through play around facing fears, develop new competencies, enhanced confidence and a resiliency in facing future challenges. From practicing spook busting games as a partnership, you and your horse will have tools and strategies in dealing with scary situations. Once practiced and skilled you will view tricky situations as golden training opportunities not to be feared. (Picture above right: Overcoming the fear of umbrellas)



## STRETCHES

There are lots of in-hand stretching exercises you can do with your horse. However although most are generally safe for any equine, if your horse has medical conditions you should consult with your vet and or an equine physiotherapist before starting stretching exercises. Stretching exercises are designed to improve a horse's posture, fitness, athletic ability and soundness. The exercises are selected on what activities your horse performs, health, limitations, ability, age, etc. A session with an in hand equine professional is an investment to ensure you are asking your horse to perform the stretching exercises correctly and safely.

## SWEET SPOT SCRATCHES



Do you know where your horse loves to be rubbed or scratched? Oh when you find that spot your horse will be in bliss wiggling its' lip, soft eyed and happy. It is a wonderful tool as you can use it as a fabulous reward for your horse. Some horses it can take time to find out what sort of touch and where feels good. Others it is quick and easy to find out. You will also discover that the place they enjoy being rubbed or scratched and how you do it can change over time too. (Picture left: Steve and Ruby)

## TACK

The Non Ridden Equine Association UK and our affiliated Non Ridden Equine Facebook groups are not anti-bit. What matters is the knowledge and compassion of the mind of the hands that hold the equipment. An educated mind enables you to understand your tack choice in relation to your horsemanship stage and ability in the bigger picture of aiming for refinement of your horsemanship. The wrong approach and equipment used badly can result in disaster and can make your horse miserable. Any tack can cause discomfort or pain if used incorrectly. The horse's head and mouth is packed full of nerve endings. The skull has little padding. The nose on the horse is delicate and fragile. To help we have provided FREE to read information, advice, suggestions and tips on tack here is the link

[www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/tack-advice-suggestions-and-tips.html](http://www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/tack-advice-suggestions-and-tips.html)

(Picture right: Kez wearing the Orbitless bridle)



## TARP



A tarp is a cheap and useful bit of kit for non ridden activities. It can be set up for your horse to walk on. Weight it down with poles to stop it flapping or blowing away. It teaches your horse to be confident walking on a surface that crinkles and makes a noise. You can also set it up to use as a parking spot to halt your horse. To teach your horse to stand on tarp you need to be patient, use positive reinforcement and allow your horse to check out all is safe. Tarp can also be used draped over fencing and secured like a banner. It can also be used secured over a frame to create a tunnel. If your horse is confident with tarp and it not moving

you can extend the use by moving the tarp, firstly away from your horse. So it is no threat. Once your horse will follow you dragging the tarp you can then put a little more life into the tarp, moving it about more. Eventually your horse may decide to play with the tarp. It pays to get professional tuition to make sure you are doing it correctly and safely. (Picture above left: Steve and Kez)

## THERAPEUTIC

Sir Winston Churchill said "There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man." And he is right. Horses are good for us physically, mentally and spiritually. There is much research that now proves that engaging with horses in our lives has many therapeutic benefits.

The Non Ridden Equine Association UK has a library and a section dedicated to **Therapeutic** here is the link <http://www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/therapeutic.html> Here you will find lots of free to read articles to inspire, delight and educate. On Non Ridden Equine Day why not enjoy the therapeutic aspects of being with a horse?

## TRAFFIC SIGNS

If you are good at DIY why not make some traffic signs. They can be used for in-hand work to help your horse become confident with traffic signs. They are useful for spook busting and can also be used for attaching other objects to. In the photo you will see we attached some windmills. They make great props for obstacle courses and can be used for practicing road safety too. (Picture right: Kez and Steve checking out the road signs and windmills)



## TWO BARRELS



Barrels are readily available and cheap to acquire. You may even have some about the place. They can be used in many ways for non ridden activities. As a squeeze as in the picture of Drum and Craig. This teaches horses to be confident in small gaps and spaces. Laid end to end flat they make a great jump. End up with the top open you can put flags in and decorate them to make up a scary corner for spook busting. Our horse Kez likes to nudge and roll the barrel about too. If you have more than two barrels you can use them to weave in and out of. Or set them out in patterns.

(Picture left: Drum and Craig)

## USEFUL TRICKS & TRICK TRAINING



Trick training can have some very practical uses. For example teaching your horse to lift up his hoof on a verbal cue so it is easier for hoof care. It is a fun way to engage your horse's mind. Horses are very intelligent and able to learn, reason and problem solve. Trick training done ethically with positive reinforcement is a great way to strengthen the bond with your horse. You have to work together as a partnership with ethical trick training tapping into what your horse finds fun and interesting. Tricks you could teach

are endless, here are just a few examples: touch an object, pick up an object, bow, give a kiss, come when called, park and stay, move backwards, move sideways, fetch a ball, etc. If you want to get started with trick training research for a local practitioner who specializes in liberty and trick training. (Picture above left: Vicki Yates and Kez)

## VITAL SIGNS

Our equines rely on us to keep them healthy. Spotting when a horse is unwell requires a knowledge of what are normal vital signs and what is not. Do you know what are normal healthy resting temperature, heart rate, respiration rate, what the mucous membranes should look like, capillary refill time, gut sounds, and hydration levels? Would you know how to check for these? If you are not sure, why not invest in learning about equine vital signs and practice on how to check for them.

## VOICES MATTER

The equine world has a long tradition and culture with equines. Mostly where the horse is seen to have a role or job. The modern equine world is mostly geared towards equines for sport and pleasure with the focus on ridden activities. Non ridden activities that are showcased are mostly in preparation for the horse to be ridden. Very little is taught at grass roots about non ridden. Very little of the diversity of non ridden and the benefits is promoted in the mainstream. Mostly people who chose not to ride or owned a non ridden equine felt isolated and judged. They felt cut a drift from the mainstream. Until the Non Ridden Equine Facebook group was launched there was no platform for people to come together and share their stories, expertise and knowledge. It was clear more has to be done to change perceptions, opinions and thinking. A non ridden horse is not a wasted horse, or valueless. Yet that is what most non ridden equines are seen to be. We have a terrible equine crisis and non ridden equines are the most at risk of abuse, neglect and abandonment. Rescue organizations are full to bursting with non ridden equines the hardest to rehome. Non Ridden Equine Day is a start in promotion and education of the many joys, benefits and delights these horses can bring. Your voice matters, change will only happen if more of us openly talk about non ridden, are proud of our non ridden equines, and press for change. One voice cannot shape change, thousands cannot be ignored. You can add your voice to the campaign. Here is the link: [www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/show-us-your-support-so-we-can-make-it-happen.html](http://www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/show-us-your-support-so-we-can-make-it-happen.html)



**The Non Ridden Equine  
Association UK**

## WALKIES



Wild horses roam over vast distances. It is a natural activity for your horse. Walking has many physical and emotional benefits. Walking with your horse is a completely different experience than riding. It gives you the opportunity to connect in a different way. Great for building a partnership bond and chilling out together. Before you venture out for a walk ensure you have great ground skills in a safe area. Minimum you and your horse must have established a fantastic halt, walk on, turn and back up. Never try to take a horse out for a walk that has separation anxiety without addressing this issue first. If you plan to walk on public roads please ensure both you and your horse are wearing plenty of Hi-Viz and have adequate insurance.

## WORDS

Horses are very intelligent and able to learn verbal voice cues have a meaning. So why not get curious about how many words you can teach your horse in relation to non ridden activities. You could teach your horse a verbal word or words to request he picks up his foot. Or to whoa, stand and park. To slow down, wait, steady or to be mindful it is slippery under foot. To move over, to back up, to turn left or right. Voice cues for all paces. A word to indicate the request to touch an object, to pick up an object.

## X-FACTOR STARS & ONLINE SHOWING

We all think we have the best horse and none of us are wrong. Our non ridden equines are stars with many talents that delight us. Just as the X-Factor show gives people a place to shine in front of the judges so does on-line showing. On-line showing is great fun and there are many classes suitable for non ridden equines. It is super easy to enter, fun to see all the wonderful entries and see the judge's placements. There are beautiful rosettes and prizes you can win. So if you love taking photographs or videos of your equine, check out on-line showing. Here is a link to a list of on-line showing platforms:

[www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/celebration.html](http://www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org/celebration.html)

(Picture right: Kez with some of his on-line showing rosettes)



## YARD SHOW



If you keep your horse on a livery yard why not put on a non ridden fun day and yard show. By getting together with fellow liveries you could pull together some fun themed activities and classes. Here are just a few suggestions: Agility, Handy Pony, Best Mane, Best Tail, Best Veteran, Best Turned Out, Fancy Dress, Best Trick, Funniest Face, Horse and Hound, In Hand Dressage Test, etc.

(Picture left: Pat with Caper and Beau on a yard agility fun day)

## YOUR HORSE'S WORLD – ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT



Horses have their food, water, shelter, environment and herd buddies provided by us. Their physical needs and mental needs are just as important. It is our responsibility to keep our horses mentally active too. This is where the role of environmental enrichment comes in. Horses enjoy activities they find entertaining or challenging. Enrichment comes in many forms and we have given suggestions on activities you can do together with your equine in this resource pack. Here we are focusing on how you can enrich your equines environment. Sensory enrichment is about the five senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. Sight can be as simple as placing horse safe objects your horse can visually check out. A plastic equine mirror is another great visual enrichment. We discussed earlier how important the sense of smell is. You could scatter some herbs on the ground for your horse to enjoy smelling. Or dotting a few drops of

essential oil onto fence rail. How we provide food can be an enrichment. You could place hay in lots of small piles across the field so the horse has to walk about more. Or prolong eating time by using small hole hay nets. You could cut up fruit and vegetables into very small pieces and scatter them across the field or hide in a horse safe container. Cognitive enrichment is about providing novel objects that a horse can safely investigate. These can be anything from a paper sack (make sure no metal staples), a cardboard box (again select one with no staples), a sturdy dog toy, horse ball, a mat, cone, branches (off a tree that is safe for horses to eat), etc. The key here is not to leave the objects in the environment. Let the horses enjoy the object and once they have lost interest remove it and store it away. That way you can use it again in a few weeks and it will come out as something of interest. Anything that lives in their environment they will become familiar with and loose interest in. Social enrichment involves allowing our equines to live with other equines, and other species they may naturally encounter with similar needs.

(Photo above left: Kez investigating a cardboard box)

## ZZZ – SNOOZE WITH YOUR HORSE

We have got to z. Horses love to snooze and it is a huge compliment if your horse chooses to snooze with you. It shows he feels safe, secure and trusts you.

I am sure we haven't included everything non ridden, but enough to kick start your ideas for non ridden activities with your own horse.

Please visit [www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org](http://www.thenonriddenequineassociationuk.org) for more information.



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